

VZCZCXRO3441
OO RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK
DE RUEHAK #6372/01 3121504
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
O 081504Z NOV 06
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9867
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEKDAI/DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEHAK/USDAO ANKARA TU IMMEDIATE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC//USDP:PDUSDP/ISA:EUR/ISA:NESA// IMMEDIATE
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J-3/J-5// IMMEDIATE
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/425ABS IZMIR TU//CC// IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/39ABG INCIRLIK AB TU IMMEDIATE
RUEPGAB/MNF-I C2X BAGHDAD IZ IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 006372

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/07/2026

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [TU](#) [IZ](#) [TC](#) [QA](#)

SUBJECT: IRAQ: GOT SEEKS TO POSTPONE CONTROVERSIAL SUNNI
CONFERENCE

Classified By: Ambassador Wilson for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (S) Summary: Turkish MFA has learned that a Nov. 14-16 NGO conference in Istanbul of apparent Iraqi Sunni Arab rejectionists may complicate the visit of Iraqi PM Maliki, scheduled for the same dates. The GOT has had no hand in organizing the conference and has been able to learn few specifics about it. Maliki's visit is Turkey's top priority, and the GOT is trying to persuade the organizers to indefinitely postpone the gathering. However, Turkey apparently lacks the legal authority to cancel it unilaterally. End summary.

12. (S) GOT Special Envoy for Iraq Celikkol told the Ambassador Nov. 8 that Turkey has learned that an NGO called the Global Anti-aggression Campaign (which is based in either Geneva or Beirut) plans to hold a conference in Istanbul Nov. 14-16. Celikkol said that he has learned that this will be chiefly a Sunni Arab grouping, and will meet on the topic of "operations against Sunnis in the world and in Iraq." The GOT is not in any way sanctioning the meeting and, Celikkol asserted, Turkish NGOs have refused to assist the organizers. Turkish efforts to get a list of attendees (including, he implied, through intel channels) have been largely unsuccessful, but Turkey has learned that the chief organizer is a Qatari national living in Dubai by the name of Sheikh Abdul Rahman bin al-Naimi.

13. (S) Celikkol further reported that the Turkish embassy in Baghdad has learned that the Iraqi cabinet has discussed this conference, and that it may complicate PM Maliki's visit to Turkey, currently planned for Nov. 15-16. Celikkol understood that Kurdish cabinet members in particular had pressured Maliki to cancel his visit if this conference were to proceed. (We understand from email traffic that Maliki has told us that he will not come to Turkey if this conference goes forward.)

14. (S) Celikkol emphasized that the GOT does not want this conference to interfere with the Maliki visit in any way, and the GOT is trying to get it postponed indefinitely if not canceled. Through intermediaries, Turkey has sent word to al-Naimi that it wants this done, and Turkish embassies in the region will not issue visas to foreigners traveling to

Turkey to attend it. (However, Celikkol added, many participants may already have visas from previous visits, some Arab nationals do not need visas for Turkey, and Iraqis traveling by air can purchase visas at the Istanbul airport.)

Celikkol said he has learned that al-Naimi may come to Istanbul soon to make preparations for the gathering, and if this occurs he will personally meet with Naimi to persuade him to call it off.

15. (S) Celikkol said that while the GOT wants the conference put off, it likely cannot stop it from occurring "by force." Turkey lacks the legal tools to do this, he asserted. Ambassador responded that he understood these constraints, and agreed that the Maliki visit is very important. To that end, whatever Turkey can do to postpone the conference would be appreciated.

16. (S) Celikkol told us that when he had first learned of the conference the dates for the Maliki visit had not yet been set, and he had hoped it would be an opportunity for Turkey to continue its policy of engaging Sunni Arabs -- including some rejectionists -- in order to draw them into a dialogue with us and to persuade them to pursue politics, not violence, to meet their goals in Iraq. He recalled that FonMin Gul and Amb. Khalilzad had discussed renewed Turkish efforts with Sunni rejectionists in September. Celikkol noted that apparently this group has met elsewhere in the Arab world, but it has not drawn such a strong reaction from the GOI. If the gathering in Istanbul were to proceed, however, the GOT would accede to Iraqi wishes; Turkish officials would not meet with attendees or sanction the conference in any way. He emphasized that a successful Maliki visit is Turkey's top priority, but that he hoped the

ANKARA 00006372 002 OF 002

Iraqis would understand that the GOT cannot unilaterally cancel the conference.

Visit Ankara's Classified Web Site at
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/ankara/>

WILSON